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Letter dated 28 March 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted at its 40th meeting, on 6 October 2005, in Addis Ababa and to Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) of 21 October 2005, under which an international working group was created to assist the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in the implementation of its programme and to consolidate and strengthen existing follow-up mechanisms.

Please find attached the text of the final communiqué issued by the International Working Group following its fifth ministerial meeting held in Abidjan on 17 March 2006 (see annex).

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

06-28901 (E) 300306

Annex

Fifth ministerial meeting of the International Working Group on Côte d'Ivoire

[Original: English and French]

Final communiqué

1. The fifth ministerial level meeting of the International Working Group was held in Abidjan on 17 March 2006, under the co-chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Francophonie of the Congo, and Mr. Pierre Schori, Special Representative of the United Nations for Côte d'Ivoire. In attendance were Ministers of Benin, France, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria and South Africa, as well as the High Representative for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire, the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, and representatives of the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the African Union, the European Union, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the World Bank.

2. The Prime Minister briefed the Group on the outcome of the meeting organized on 28 February in Yamoussoukro with the main Ivorian political leaders, which provided a new impetus to the peace process. The Prime Minister also briefed the Group on the progress achieved in the implementation of the road map, in particular regarding the first meeting of the entire Cabinet; the functioning of the Independent Electoral Commission; the preparation for the commencement of the identification process and of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; and the security measures required to preserve the independence of the Radio Télévision ivorienne and to guarantee, throughout the entire national territory, its broadcasts, as well as unhindered and equitable access by all the political forces. The Group notes with satisfaction the holding of school examinations in the north of the country.

3. The Group congratulates the Prime Minister for the initiatives he has taken, in consultation with the Head of State, to create a climate of confidence conducive to expediting the implementation of the road map. The Group congratulates the political leaders for the meeting of 28 February in Yamoussoukro and welcomes the new spirit of dialogue, which is beginning to prevail among the Ivorian political class. The Group urgently calls on the political leaders to fully comply with the commitments made in Yamoussoukro, namely to maintain the dialogue among them, with a view to finding solutions to difficulties that might arise in the course of the peace process. The political leaders should also promote the spirit of Yamoussoukro among their followers and ensure that everyone, including the media, desist from any incitement to hatred and violence and contribute positively to the peace and national reconciliation process.

4. The Group was briefed by the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission who was accompanied by his Vice-Chairs. The Chairman outlined the activities of the Commission. The Group noted with satisfaction the establishment of the bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission.

5. The Group urges the Independent Electoral Commission to take all necessary measures to ensure that the elections are held as scheduled, no later than 31 October

2006. In this regard, the Group noted that it would be particularly urgent to complete the process of identification and establishment of electoral lists and welcomes the decision to conduct them simultaneously.

6. After a briefing by the High Representative for the elections, Mr. Antonio Monteiro, at the end of his mission, the International Working Group thanked and congratulated him for the efforts which he undertook and that led to the establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission. The Group wished that the Secretary-General would designate a successor as soon as possible to pursue the preparation of the elections within the indicated time frame.

7. The Group reaffirms that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process should commence urgently. It welcomes the resumption of the dialogue between the Chiefs of Staff of the Forces de défense et de sécurité and the Forces armées des forces nouvelles in order to resolve all problems relating to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the restructuring of the defence and security forces of Côte d'Ivoire.

8. The Group expresses its deep concern about the repeated obstructions to the freedom of movement of the impartial forces in violation of paragraph 4 of resolution 1643 (2005), as recalled by the sanctions committee of the Security Council. The Group underscores the imperative of facilitating the immediate redeployment of the troops of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to the Western part of the country to enable them to pursue their peace and security mission as mandated by the Security Council. In this regard, the Group notes with satisfaction that their return to this part of the country is imminent. In addition, it underscores that the return of the humanitarian agencies to that region is absolutely essential to facilitate the resumption of assistance to the most vulnerable groups. The Group calls for the return of the region to civilian authority.

9. The International Working Group strongly condemns the persistent violations of human rights, in particular the attacks against ministers. It considers that such acts seriously undermine the atmosphere of trust, which must be restored to enhance the spirit of reconciliation among all Ivorians. It urgently calls on the Ivorian parties to combat the growing impunity in the country.

10. The Group welcomes the important financial and other assistance provided by some donors in support of the implementation of the road map. The Group calls on other potential donors to consider providing assistance to the Government on the basis of a detailed budget, in particular with respect to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the identification process, the elections and the rehabilitation of the Radio Télévision ivorienne infrastructure.

11. The Group reiterates its call on all the Ivorian parties to cooperate closely with it in order to facilitate the implementation of the peace process.

12. The Group will hold its next meeting on 20 April 2006 in Côte d'Ivoire.